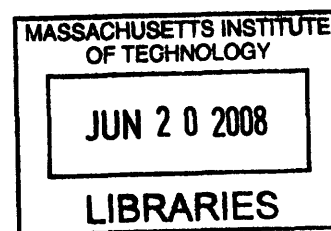


Through Mimesis And Methodology

By

Edgar Pedroza



B.F.A.

The Cooper Union For The Advancement Of Science And Art, 2006

ARCHIVES

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN VISUAL STUDIES
AT THE
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

JUNE 2008

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SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE
ON MAY 22, 2008 IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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ABSTRACT

The goal of this document is to outline the trajectory in which I have been working the past several years. I would like to comment and detail the production of several projects, including Site Nine: Indefensible Structures, Text 11: Site Translations, Study For Casablanca: Maps For Access And Improvised Housing, and Lavon, Texas – Levittown, New York.

The reach of the projects, and it is perpetually adaptive to new concerns, is not to assign a space between art, architecture, and planning. Even though there is certainly space which the works will invoke between these areas. This document and the projects would question why there should be such a space and what it could achieve.

It may be possible to see at such a point that assigning nomenclature can be considered a quick task and the value is the content of a word, not by the name by which it is called. This is not to say meaning and context cannot be derived from the title of disciplines or fields, they in fact provide considerable insight.

The aforementioned projects, and those to follow, would look into the social climates of a location and only after considerations of the political, economic, and communicative indicators, courses of intervention would be developed. I would like to note, ever more in the continuation of these works, the implementation of intervention becomes less so. The projects, in chronology, quietly move from methods of production to methods of research. This was due to an increasing appeal to the cultural sensitivity of any and all methods of production, in both domestic and foreign capacities.

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Through Mimesis And Methodology

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Master Of Science In Visual Studies
June 2008
Department Of Architecture
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1 Introduction

Considering the topic of project based interventions into social climates, particularly in the developing world, I speak from the point of view of an artist or someone who at some point in time has spent a deal of energy producing objects for public exhibition.

What is the developing world? It would be impossible, or at least I would find it difficult, to speak without qualifications or references regarding any of the ruminations that have been quite deliberately observed through type. Again, what is the developing world? For that matter, what is an intervention or a social climate? What is the overlap between the aforementioned and for what purpose could the three become abundant in discussion?

For purposes of brevity, or may it be focus, I open a discussion of the topics, in concert from the point of view of an interdisciplinary, creative mind.

To start at the present or what so recently came before, and it would be a conservative appeal to do so, I would like to discuss the past. I do not intend to be so expository as to develop a chronology of events suitable, or not, to support whatever argumentation may be forthcoming. I will attempt to include only what matters and what I consider to be relevant.

The present is developing a body of work considered to occupy the in-between of the plastic arts, architecture, and planning. Previously I received formal training in sculpture, photography, and that the training of someone who produces multiple formats of time based media. Each of these efforts developed and deviated over the course of several years, not completely disparate from one another and not without overlap, and arguably have undergone states of fruition without conclusion. It is in a positive tone that I could ever argue the stages of metamorphoses of any and all things to be made of transitions but never conclusions. For the conclusion of any and all things is impossible. To discuss history is to discuss a series of changing perceptions and to discuss a catalog is to argue the selection or exclusion of articles. In that respect, I discuss all things I have ever taken a part of.

I, certainly, began producing indiscriminate amounts of discreet objects. These objects were composed of wood, concrete, and plaster. The objects were solid boxes of varying lengths, widths, and heights. They were poured over steel frames resulting in increasingly opaque and heavy cubes. Additional materials included in the sculptures were paraffin wax and ceramics. With time, the objects became increasingly heavier and more complex. I began to understand these objects not merely as such but as internalizations, although at such a point in time it would be difficult to say over what exactly. The training of any cultural producer whether it be a visual artist, dancer, or writer hardly ever is requisite to requirements to which one must adhere or not proceed. The instruction thrust upon those so eloquently called "the future" is to produce, at that without question. The result is exactly that, results without question. This period of time certainly does pass. It may be, without question, one would not continue.

I implore, in the discussion of any past practice and to note parallel lapses in time, to receive the progression of all previous training to apex at a single point in time. This point in time being in the near past. I would like to note that I speak at times figuratively and non figuratively in the third and first person. Whatever method I find suitable, I will press. But I will not discuss any matters that are unrelated and cannot be paralleled to my own dispositions.

As I have previously mentioned, a substantial portion of my time was occupied in the production of cast objects. These objects were for all intensive purposes sculptures produced for public exhibition. Early on, I came to understand these objects as disconcerted with the spaces around

them. It seemed inappropriate once they reached the gallery. They bear edges poured to a right angle, bright as plaster of paris covered in a thin film of petroleum jelly. This period of time certainly passed. The objects have since gone into passing, yet not in any respect we may usually associate with. For many years I have maintained a studio, albeit nowhere near any place I have lived in nearly half a decade, and there these objects remain. The years and the lack of climate control in the space have melted away the wax. Other imperfections and patinas have applied themselves to the objects without my interference. It is possible at the point of this sight, or in understanding that the objects continued to remain in existence, several conceptions could have taken place.

As to how I understand the production of objects, in the present and foreseeable future, they shall bear a unique relationship to their places of birth, their living, and their passing. This, for any given material, may cover the course of several lifetimes and all the world. What is cement but a material that was once mined at a discreet location and processed in another, applied and made concrete elsewhere, and restored or returned to the earth at a processing facility. This could not be ignored, how could I ignore the consciousness of materials. And I slowly come to acknowledge, consider, and adapt to the collective consciousness of all the variables of production. I also discover precedents, although with some liberty, I can understand the hesitance of Constantin Brancusi to display objects out of context. I do not wish to draw a hard parallel to myself. I merely note the acknowledgement on the significant relationship between the object, author, and history. Yet those are not the only significances one can draw with certainty.

I should want to acknowledge the history of materials, not only in retrospect, but as a requisite. It is a privilege to understand not only the past of the tools of our labor, but the context in which we will use them. How we choose, and I stress the choice, and on what we decide to divide our time is certainly then consequence to perceptions of the field. The physical act of labor, the observation of materials, the production of results in work are all consequence to context, should we realize it or not. This may alter the way we work, how we choose to work, or on what we work. Should this be a determinant in the way we work, it will only prove to become qualifications and diligence for that work.

I understood the disconcert of objects in the gallery. These were issues as they related to specific materials and the way I had chosen to manipulate them. The following were events of the recent past, at most three to four years. The year is two thousand and seven. I could not produce objects as I had done in the past. To do so, as was tried, was upon hesitation and discomfort. These attempts were certainly numbered and few. I did seek alternate materials and transfigurations from original shapes and forms. I came to realize this was too great a departure from all that preceded it. Why should I ignore the process, materials, and shortfalls of all the work that was the past. In what is now exactly that, what could have changed, where would this take place, what would "it" be?

The result was a series of conclusions from where I am and how I work now. The question of "On what do I work?" will also come into question, bearing a singular importance on the preceding questions. In two thousand and five I initially began to develop a series of projects in which I continue to be actively involved, although I would concede my detailing the projections of the work have and continually will change. There is now no other way to work than to periodically and dynamically interrogate one's practice. It is a choice, in both conscious and unconscious respects.

I returned to the materials of previous labors. I considered the sand, cement, and steel I had used before. The outlying questions during the previous and considerable period of dormancy

returned as a central argument to what would be done. I could not return to the studio, at least for the time being. It would be difficult to see any efforts of production as discreet objects for the white cube². It would not be enough to question the universal meaning of a material, not only is that questionable, that is trite. What is the context of the manipulations I am applying? Where should I choose to make them and for what reason(s)? These were the initial and continually re-applied considerations for the Site Projects.

In determining materials, context, and location, I likened myself to consider vernacular architecture. Although my concern as to the finality of any labor I was to incur was unclear, an understanding of function versus formal relations was all but necessary. It would be difficult to disregard my own history, and I do not seek to develop a biography, in reconciling my own thoughts. Similarly, it would be with equal difficulty to mishandle the hindsight which ostensibly become a key point in the development of new work.

The following was a project titled Site One. I could not disregard the value of vernacular architecture and its applicability to my own practice. On the first introduction of this word, I would like to comment on the derivation of. No longer commenting on the production of discreet objects, the sundry pursuits of an individual, or the thoughts of, they are all around. That is what I would like to call the practice of a person(s). The restriction of medium, occupation, or methodology is irrelevant; the aforementioned should change, they are expected to change. It is their dynamism that supports the continued respiration of any practice. There a lack of could only be described as dogma, the production of objects under a singular, unwavering, methodology. That is not to comment on the disvalue of dogma in practice, it is only to produce an antithesis.

Simply stated, Site One was, is, a construction entrenching itself in the working methodologies of vernacular architecture; although, the breadth of the work claims a dialogue with social, economic, and political climates. The inclusion of socio-political and socio-economic contexts in the discussion of materials via their manipulations would require a superlative discourse beyond that of vernacular architecture. The resulting nomenclature is that of vernacular space.

Site One took place in the post-vernal months of two thousand and five, although particular amounts of preparation date back to two thousand and four. The project not only confronted a methodology of how and where to work, it also brought in to question the designation of the work itself. The anterior of what may be called the practice up to this point in time could aptly be considered the production of sculptures. The result was a question of what space the work would inhabit. Considering the methods of production, the scale, and effects of the work, could it negotiate the boundaries of sculpture. To what fields could the work develop a compromise? The natural linkage was to architecture. I could see the schism between public sculpture and non-commercial, non-residential architecture drawing shorter.

2 Abstract

The goal of this document is to outline the trajectory in which I have been working the past several years. I would like to comment and detail the production of several projects, including Site Nine: Indefensible Structures, Text 11: Site Translations, Study For Casablanca: Maps For Access And Improvised Housing, and Lavon, Texas – Levittown, New York.

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3 Research

Site 09 Indefensible Structures 2006

In the series of works from *Site 09 'Indefensible Structures'*, I seek to continue a discourse that elaborates on the relationships of public space, architecture, and the production of art. 'Indefensible Structures' continues the ideology of the *Site Projects*, through the production of site-specific constructions that engage the social, economic, political, and architectural space in which they are situated.

Site 09 'Indefensible Structures' is the development of building materials that simultaneously act for and against themselves. The planned, and executed, constructions incorporating the use of developed building materials is the intended act of 'Indefensible Structures'. The constructions may range from single room low income housing to multi level facilities such as hospitals or public facilities.

The production and display of the aforementioned spaces in *Site 09 'Indefensible Structures'* would be limited to their initial location in early constructions of the project (e.g. the studios and test spaces attributed to *Site 09*) and their original intended location, areas of armed conflict in petroleum rich regions. These areas include but are not limited to various cities in southern Chad whose economy relies on the production from burgeoning oil fields, Kirkukk, Iraq, or various cities in Angola.

The particular nature of the building materials to be developed is a heterogeneous solid composed of standard masonry materials (e.g. Portland Cement, sand, mortar mix) and divergent forms of refined petroleum (e.g. oils, lubricants, gasoline, exhausted diesel). Essentially, the combination is that of petroleum, cement, and aggregate. The combination of the aforementioned materials results in a solidified compound that physically resembles a black, tarry concrete yet whose true identity becomes fragility. The new properties of the building material become limited tensile strength, characteristics of flammability, and a shortened lifespan. The result of constructions incorporating the use of the new building material would result in architecture whose utilitarian value has been removed. In effect, the constructions would become increasingly dissentious, supporting systems regulating its destruction rather than systems securing its continuing preservation.

It is not only the architecture of *Site 09* that portrays efforts in vain; because the 'Indefensible Structures' in all locations would be constructed from local materials employing local labor, the region's public would become at once the catalyst and realization of the efforts that have been in vain. The contradictions surrounding the 'Indefensible Structures' become immediate. The constructions are unviable, not only due to the danger from inhabiting increasingly fragile structures but from their heightened susceptibility to modes of conflict. In the event of proximal armed conflict, they will not only bear the tendency to quickly implode but also the likelihood of conflagrating afterwards.

Through the deductions concerning the reality of the 'Indefensible Structures', the region's public then confronts the actuality of the universal vulnerability in all architecture. In states of armed conflict, the 'Indefensible Structure' would provide no haven as would the home or code municipality. The focus is deflected from the singular danger of an 'Indefensible Structure' and placed on the governing systems allowing and perpetuating conflict. The futile participation in the constructions of *Site 09* becomes a negligible footnote in the discourse of the economic and political state.

Rightly, the placements of *Site 09* 'Indefensible Structures' is intended to acutely engage the social, economic, political, and architectural space of the locations under the duress of armed conflict. The anomaly that the region is also believed to be, or factually, rich in natural resources such as petroleum or natural gasses is neither an accident nor the singular point of discussion.

The constructions themselves could stand in the rubble past erected structures. The 'Indefensible Structures' themselves could be built from the aggregate that the rubble would provide. The 'Indefensible Structures' with time or incidents of armed intervention would become rubble themselves. Their becoming level would ultimately be no different from the structure that came before it or after it.

The relationship of the political and economic spaces in which the proposed architecture resides would conditionally re-animate the social and political climate through its presence. The focus and implications of 'Indefensible Structures' would soon less become a consideration of their danger but digress to a discussion of the socio-political and socio-economic climate in which they are placed. *Site 09* 'Indefensible Structures' is the mediation that would bring the ends of this dialogue.

Discussion and Criticism

SMVisS Masters Of Science In Visual Studies Fall Final Panel Review

Participants In Review: Ute Meta Bauer, Annatina Caprez, Alia Farid, Andrea Frank, Joseph Gibbons, Hope Ginsburg, Larissa Harris, Wendy Jacob, Marisa Jahn, Kate James, Meir Lobaton, Regina Moeller, Gregory Williams, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Joe Zane

Date: 14 December 2006

Time: 04:19pm

Location: 265 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02141 Building N52-315

Source: Transcribed from a video recording taken by Joseph Gibbons

Camera Type: Sanyo Xacti VPC HD1A

04:19pm

EP. ... space to be mediated through constructions, so I have a lot of architectural studies, you see grids, and I've always ... grids, and draw these grids, so to understand this linear space, and so here we have just the complete of a building, no interior, no exterior, just the space compartmentalized, and here we have the little person, and so here we have some different constructions, its almost the most basic thing, beam, beam, beam, beam, Lincoln log, that's a house, when its tall enough, and so here we have a foundation, I can make that, a staircase, beams, curving beam, that's already a very complicated interrogation, and this is where I thought, this is how I'm going to make it, I'm going to build a box, I'm going to develop this new building material, I'm going to mix oil, Im going to mix cement, and god willing, its going to go into this box and its going to cure, because I have no idea if this is even feasible yet, and so then you know, then after this I can go into more complicated thing, here beams go together, they are bound together and this can go together and make a house, ... and this was within the vernacular style of not only Portugal but a lot of Latin American and South American countries and this is a house that can be developed out of this material in some of the regions of Angola, so just as an example, not only talking here about the theory, beams made out of this material, here is a house that can be made out of this material, and it will exist as a site installation ... the idea of this material to sketches, the most basic form and only recently can I elevate the project to saying now it can become this specific type of experiment for this specific place...

KJ. I wonder about your ideas of structure and I also wonder about whether you've actually done the math to figure out how much weight this material holds, how much actual material research you've done, but mostly about the structure, because from my time in architecture school, I would not think to put concrete in a Lincoln log shape, but maybe there is a good reason for that.

EP. The whole idea of the project in terms of structural engineering, its almost counter productive because this material is supposed to fall apart or will fall apart in time, ...

KJ. But this will stand up first, right?

EP. Yeah.

GW. I'm just, I want to make sure I'm understanding what you're ultimately supposed to tell me.

EP. I mean the experience, and the participation leads to the interrogation of the climate.

GW. Do you think the people that would, I mean who is going to, the people who need to get the message are the people whom are actually waging wars and coming into the oil fields and taking the profits from oil out of the country and not ... are they going to ...

EP. I mean, the project is not only in locations that have transnational war but also civil war where it is localized and where I mean you can see militants who were taking part in taking this money and fighting a war, I would say that is uncommon that they would take part in other employment. If they come to build it ...

UMB. But cant you also mention, I found it interesting to have this kind of vernacular architecture right next to the very corporate government that allows for these conditions, so what you described in the beginning, you wanted to continue that, there is the house of the master and the house of the slave, rather than put the house of the slave next to another house of a slave, you really make this confrontation.

EP. It is something that I had not considered at the midterm, but, how ...

UMB. No, but this is why I think, you live here, you say "I want to give a statement" because obviously there is enough stuff happening now where we are also involved and you live here, I think you have like this, to come into right next door, you know, you might not necessarily speak for those in Angola or somewhere in history, but you can speak out for somebody who is really troubled who lives here and you obviously also see parts of the cause that creates that, and that really, ... you know, ...

EP. I came to MIT to speak from...

UMB. I mean, rather than to make this huge detour through Africa or whatever, I mean, go directly to the next corporate building, is there engagement in that? I'm not saying skip this idea, just also to have a first test ...

EP. ... where they are located, they specifically engage the economic, the social, the political, and the architectural space of where they are situated, we are not talking about an architectural or sculptural space that is transplanted, that gets commissioned, that gets put in a certain place, so what we are really talking about is developing something that is vernacular, at the very most, vernacular architecture, because vernacular comes from the Latin word, vernaculus, and what vernaculus means, it refers to the slaves quarters that are behind the masters house, and so vernacular architecture, its developed from the materials that are most immediately available, so it represents the geography from the materials, and the conditions of the building, because it has to adapt, as opposed to the masters house which is more traditional or transplanted and from, you know, from where the colonizers are from, so I have been developing projects that I treat as vernacular because they are developed from local materials, they are built according to the local specifications or architecture, and they are built by local people, so in the truest sense, they engage everything that is local, so this semester was focused on specifically developing a project and even further that called site nine: indefensible structures, and so the locale that I want to engage in site nine is very particular, it basically has two components and it can be located in many places, it is a region that is both rich in oil and natural resources but then also a region that is under the duress of armed conflict, whether this exists as a civil war or whether it exists as a transplanted transnational war, and so these places we can already boil down to the southern oil fields of Chad, the oil hubs of Iraq like Kirkuk, or most recently the eastern border of Angola because they have lots of offshore oil fields, ... a building material that speaks specifically to this location, so what happens when you build from

this newly developed building material, you get a material that seemingly functions as concrete but its characteristics are limited tensile strength, weakened load capacity, and shortened life, so you have a building that basically instead of developing a program of sustainability, regulates its own destruction, so we have, if you place it in a region that is under the duress of armed conflict, a place of mortar blasts and open fire, then you have a building that isn't going to stand up to this environment, in fact if a mortar blast goes off so many feet away, it is going to crumble easier and in fact after it crumbles, because it has flammable characteristics, it is going to set on fire, so then you have a building developed in a region that is producing oil but also has conflict, so not only, this type of vernacular architecture is not only taking from the materials but its is also taking from the socio-political climate and bringing that into the structure. Why would I do this? Is it about demonstrating that I can design a building that falls apart or develop a very counterproductive practice, an irony of the highest sense? No, what I want to do is I want to see this as an engagement and so I take this idea to this very specific site, I have already mentioned three sites where this could happen, I go there and the idea goes there and so then this project, if its accepted, then begins to be built from local materials, by people who live in this region, and developed in the vernacular style, so if buildings look this way *it* will look this way because this is the way that people usually build things, .. it is going to fall apart, not only is it going to fall apart, its going to fall apart as a result of insurgency, we are trying to hide form gunfire, there are bombs going off, my life has been threatened, so why would I want to higher the risk of my life being threatened by having this thing next to me that in itself is explosive, ... acts as a perpetuator and it propagates these wars because these regions, we can take Angola for example, throughout the twentieth century, they are very rich in natural resources, there is a lot of foreign investment, and so through the exploitation of these resources, vested foreign interests get rich but a lot of this money goes back into the local economy and a lot of it gets funneled and channeled back to guerilla groups and whatnot, so it perpetuates the war, really the problem is this political and social climate that creates the problems, so the question is realizing that yes, we really should not design building that ... but this really isn't the problem here, the problem is the conditions of the space, the fact that there is a war, the fact that the things that are supposed to be useful to us, to enrich our lives, to make us industrialized, is really being used against us, to continue this war, ... at a more base root, I feel a connection, why would I want to do this through, why not become a politician or why not write books, I feel a connection to architecture or sculpture because my background and because I come from the lower class, I feel close to construction, I feel that I can mediate this space because it is what I know. So when you take a look, how does site nine exist in the studio because obviously we don't produce oil here, I want to just develop the building material where there is a cross between petroleum and concrete in a way that I can here in the studio and also develop architectural standards ...

Selected Criticism & Posterior Response

GW. I'm just, I want to make sure I'm understanding what you're ultimately supposed to tell me.

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The purported goal of Site 09 was to propose a system in which social change would occur from the epicenter out. The vehicle for the delivery of the antecedent message would be the constructions, made from the building material, located at a particular location seeking that socio political change. The location of the project is one that is fixed, considering the vernacular nature of the constructions. Although, the resituating of Site 09 to a foreign context would prove to catalyze an external discussion of the work, it would fail in raising local public awareness.

Process and Resolve

The construction of Site Nine: Indefensible Structures was the development of a building material. Its properties would consist of those that are commonly produced and employed in the normalcy of architecture, yet combined such that the resulting material would be foreign to architectural practice.

The selection of the materials in part was due to previous experience as well as identifying a site wherein both materials would naturally occur. In previous months, I had become increasingly interested in natural resources and how they shape regional politics and territorial conflict. A natural resource that quickly came to mind was crude oil.

The forms for the beams were first constructed from medium density fiberboard. Due to the fiberboards susceptibility to expansion when exposed to moisture and liquids. Prior to assembling the forms, the individual pieces were primed and coated with enamel based paints. The color of the enamel was chosen to be yellow in order to quickly gauge coverage.

Prior to pouring into the forms, the inside walls are covered with petroleum jelly in order to ensure the beams release from the forms. The cement and petroleum mixture are mixed prior to pouring into the forms. The action to take place in the forms is settling and curing. The mixture has been developed to lack an aggregate. The beams have also been developed to lack an internal structure such as ree-bar supports.

The beams were all poured in the courtyard of 265 Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The first three beams were poured in late October, the second set of three in early December. A total of six beams were produced.

Each individual beam was produced to measure 5"x5"x7'.

The project, up to the stage of its interim finality, was a model. The beams were stacked upon one another in a Lincoln log type structure. The bulk of the work was to produce a material that properly adhered to itself during the curing process. The eventual shape or application of the material could be manipulated.

The foundation for the work was the ideology, "architecture as social justice". The concept that edifice could further intervene beyond its physical standing was an appealing approach to develop work.

Text 11: Site Translations 2007

Continuing the dialogue of interventions in public space, Text 11: Site Translations is a project that mediates the space between physical constructions and intangible objects. The ideas that have been previously discussed in the Site Projects, i.e. Site One: Building From The Earth, Site Three: Kilometer Circumference Study, Site Nine: Indefensible Structures, have developed a vocabulary concerned with the prescriptive discourse of the vernacular.

Although analogous in many ways, a discussion of vernacular architecture as opposed to vernacular space subtly but surely delineates two camps of ideas. Whereas vernacular architecture is wholly concerned with the availability of natural resources, vernacular space is embedded with elements from the social, political, and economic space of a locale.

The Site Projects developed have sought to engage the discourse of vernacular space through physical constructions. The newest of the Site Projects, the project in question, though exists as a text and not as a physical construction. The transition for this project from a physical intervention in space to an ephemeral and dislocated intervention is one that arose from a desire to address particular issues of public space.

An interest in the site becoming disjointed from one fixed point in space was a preliminary consideration and goal in the development of the project. This led to the assertion that a site did not have to exist as a construction at a fixed point, rather the passage through public space could act as a site itself. The itinerary of the passage, multiple points and the space between, being the surrogate to a single fixed point in space.

Questions in understanding the site as multiple points as opposed to one. How then can passage act as an intervention, through the dislocation and transformation of space only through passing. What are the qualities of passage, can it persist after the act and leave a remnant(s). Can the passage deliberate on the particulars of vernacular space as a construction does; speaking to and embedded with elements from the corresponding socio-political and socio-economic climates.

The passage then occurs. It will be called Text 11: Site Translations. Text 11: Site Translations exists as a catalog of notes, coordinates, and corresponding photographs.

If passage is an act, is it then coordinated? Is it premeditated? What is passage subject to, if organic, should it mutate according to the conditions of the site? What becomes a subjective/objective choice in determining passage?

The question between subjective and objective choices, when considering passage through public spaces, becomes confused. The distinctions between the two become full of similarities, schisms, and contradictions.

What is a coordinate, what is a photograph, what are directions through public space, what are notes on that passage? What do they mean? Is the ownership of public space ever possible, if so, what is ever foreign and what is ever trespass?

Text 11: Site Translations is a text in the imperative form, but extracted from the interrogative passage of the aforementioned.

Discussion and Criticism

SMVisS Masters Of Science In Visual Studies Spring Final Panel Review

Participants In Review: Ute Meta Bauer, Annatina Caprez, Amanda McDonald Crowley, Andrea Frank, Joseph Gibbons, Hope Ginsburg, Wendy Jacob, Marisa Jahn, Kate James, Danielle Meyer, Helen Molesworth, Antoni Muntadas, Luis Berrios Negron, Sofia Ponte, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Benjamin Wood, Joe Zane .

Date: 03 May 2007

Time: 10:41am

Location: 265 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02141 Building N52-315

Source: Transcribed from a video recording taken by Joseph Gibbons

Camera Type: Samsung Digimax S500

10:41am

EP. What I came to MIT for was to explore space, which I could not define, but I knew that it existed between art and architecture, ...

10:47am

EP. ...it is losing its, its not finite anymore, first, I understood it as a physical construction, in a certain spot, but then that construction could be in many spots, and this semester what I have been working with, this space between these two, it doesn't necessarily have to exist as a physical construction in one space, at one locality, that the relationship between ..., really what I have been exploring now is kind of a social space where people interact, I believe that architecture is defined by the cultures in which it is situated, obviously the immediate availability of materials but also of the resources and that art functions in a very similar way, that people are producing art at a certain place and time because there is almost a need for it, and that even through engaging this space and passing through it, that whatever can be understood from a physical construction and whatever can be understood from a physical artwork, can also be understood through a simple passage, so what I planned to do this semester was to almost create a narrative shell for this passage where I could understand a space in the same way, as if I would have constructed something there using materials or influences, what I did over the winter, I planned a trip to go through Asia with South Korea as a base, and from that point to view my passage through whatever spaces I would encounter, through three different physical types of engagement, one would be, at the same time engagements would be dealing with the idea of objectivity and subjectivity, what one can, the type of artificial environment one can naturally produce for himself, which artists and architects obviously do, but then also as a citizen, we encounter a certain environment that we cannot control, I mean its controlled by the people around us, so what I wanted to do was, kind of take photographs, of all these places I encountered, which was this visual recording, a visual statistic, but then also to take the coordinates of every single photograph, which then become transmuted to this kind of space where, okay, now we are dealing with mapping, and where you are and where people are but its not the same as kind of this narrative which a photograph can tell, this is something that tells us, it describes a very different story, about a place, that every place on the earth is a finite location, but then also through a text, that I would prepare over everything that I would encounter, whether it how I move through a space, or whether its how what I see, or how, I mean, of course I can comment on the people that I see, navigating, or the places I've encountered, and so what happened, with no other guideline other than the fact that I was

going to, say, enter Seoul on January 2nd and then leave from Seoul on February 1st, everything else was up to chance, and up to what I believed, where I could go, or where ever I would be led, I would be, so I ended up going to South Korea, and Japan, and North Korea, and my goal was to collect all of these documents, and then put them together, and I knew from the very beginning that I wanted for it to be a book, and so this book, I called it text 11: site translations, and so the way it is constructed, first it's a text, of which there are seventy pages of writing, and then in relationship to how many photographs were taken, there is also eighteen pages of coordinates, for the eighteen rolls of film that were taken of every single photograph bearing a coordinate, but at the same time, how this space would completely define where I was going and what type of information travels would be, I mean for example, when I was in North Korea, the gps tracker gets confiscated, there are no coordinates for this place, and then also the last part of the book, just a series of photographs, to me, what I've been describing to you, it's a narrative of how I have been working, and what I hope to achieve, but, really, what I'm attempting to do, is for this to be a manifest through the text, so, yeah ...

10:54am

EP. ... part of working in a way where I would define a project or a site or locality, people could visit this place. I've worked in places that are remote, the availability of these sites are for people that are there or people that go there to see a site, but I wanted to construct a work, I was saying, where the site is, its almost an itinerary, or a passage, and it could be dislocated from the site, it exists in this book, also as an afterthought, this book could exist also as a way to revisit the site, if you had the book, you could go to these places through the use of coordinates, or through the use of text, or through the use of photographs, and kind of have this, I mean, here is the simulacrum, but then, but at the same time, it's the actual work.

WJ. What is the significance of the two images per page?

EP. I thought in terms of producing this as a work, for a book, a lot of what happened, truly the work was kind of coordinates that were logged into a gps tracker, a lot of handwritten coordinates as well, half of the book was written in manuscript on paper, and so, really it was the exposure inside the camera, in translating this to a book, I made certain choices, and I thought for there to be two images, the context of seeing one image side by side, was valuable, because sometimes the image is repeated, or the images are in the same place, but only in a different cardinal direction, for example, one is south, the other is south southwest.

AMC. Is that what you are saying, there are always two images, taken at the same location?

EP. Yes, there's always two images.

AF. What is the text about? It's hard because I did not have the chance to really read anything, beforehand.

EP. I make no reservations about this book, this work is not a book because it is a book, the text is not only limited to describing how I exit and enter through places, but it is also recalling examples like denominations of money that I have, how maybe looking at something reminds me of something else, another place or how it is similar.

AMC. What is confusing in the book is form to me, the coordinates are not next to the image, or the stories, the "diary" parts, is there a reason that you separated them out, into the three separate chapters,

EP. I think what you are saying is that there are three chronologies, that are side by side. Why not have one text, one coordinate, one photograph? That is because the pacing of that documentation was not parallel, the differences were different times, even the coordinate and the photograph could have been separated by several minutes, so, these three different kind of descriptions, or illustrations were meant to have happened separately, but, happen to be able to inform one another, and the book.

AMC. Do you remember, when you were taking the photographs, what were you thinking, your ideas or your thoughts about art and architecture, sculpture and architecture, what are you trying to achieve through photographic work?

EP. I don't think that it was photographing particular objects, I was trying to be very objective, about, I mean, simply not looking through the viewfinder, and not just stopping at certain points, I do not think that it was portraiture, I think of it as something else,

AM. Visually, the subjective and objective data, and the way, to produce that as a book, and a book is actually objective to somebody and is a personal experience, to read the book, to me it comes more as an experiential document that is kind of a diary, it's your own diary, and I wonder, and I think, if this is something that you wonder, for your work, is where you locate the audience? For whom you do the things? I have the feeling that some, and most of the time, you do it for yourself. Its fine, but I think you need to talk more about that. Because if you see a Richard Long, or a Hamill Fulton work, you know, I think, they declare it is their own experience, and you never talk about that. I think you should talk more about that, because I think it is what sustains your work, because the book, I am not so sure is the work, the work is your experience. I don't know how you've related that to sculpture.

EP. I think it is an interesting schism, there is the actual work and the way that I discuss it. I mean, I think, of course, this is incredibly, deeply biographical, I think in this form, if you look through it, it looks almost like a diary. I think I do, I locate myself in it. But at the same time, I think that, and who wouldn't agree with this, of course I am the looking glass.

11:11am

AF. A voyage can be a piece of art or can be a delineation of space, and thus... art, right? Because you are between architecture, art, and space and you want to somehow show us somehow that's where you're next step was within your work and that this is the form that you found for it ...

EP. Yes.

AF. But that's your concern right? So, like I think the idea of the performance is interesting because you walking from here to over there might be then for us to experience that, exactly this, like you, ... walking through space being art might happen. So I think its an interesting thing to think about as a way to talk to the audience and maybe here you would only need the coordinates and nothing, I don't know, or nothing, I mean how ephemeral can you stay and then, but recreate it for us , somehow. Does that make sense?

UMB. Also, to clarify, I'm trying to encourage you to trust...

EP. I obviously do, which is why I feel completely okay, I see the two as absolutely related.

UMB. But this is there, why do you need to explain us what is there, if its there, its there.

EP. Because that's, because that is what I was supposed to do. I mean that's what were doing, I'm told by Muntadas that there is an exhibition where one does not speak and there is the critique where one speaks about the work.

AF. Its fine, I think were just opening, we don't need to talk about what the presumptions were but maybe we want to understand what would be this would be positive in the future.

AM. I think there is many ways to talk about your work, I think it is, your work is very much of the heritage of the 70s, strongly Hammill Fulton, and Long, but On Kawara, On Kawara, to say it exists, but the thing you bring it to, its so an egotistic situation where you are pretty much the center of the situation. For example, okay, you give the reference of the material, like Richard Serra, but why don't you need one word to introduce? And this is the context where you could say about the work, just to give credit to these people and to say where you come from because I think its in your ...

EP. I didn't come from that, I absolutely did not come from these people, my work does not come from these people, I wasn't even born. I didn't even know these people until they were mentioned to me, I'm producing a work right now from my own circumstance, and my own instance, in this culture, in this city, and this state, I absolutely am not.

AM. But Edgar do you think after spending four years at Cooper Union and spending a year here, you are not knowing all these people, I mean you are producing this work now, ... I think its part of your background, I think the more important thing is to be generous when you have influence... This did not start with you. And I think if you want to do, then you need to put that in the work, accept it, this is a very narcissistic ego-trip, and push that and defend that, I mean, its not, it's a position, an artist needs to defend what he feels, but he needs to be behind that, if you want to defend a narcissistic egotistic situation in 2007, fine, you do it, but you need to confront the situation, about the audience, about your own colleagues, and everybody, here, it could be important for you, it should be.

EP. I mean, I don't think I have to. I think that is the case for everyone, the narcissistic egotistic practice.

UMB. No, you see it as a critique, Edgar, it's not about critique, if you address, ... Why not let the work speak for itself? Why not test it? That is more to be more experimental about it, and to have a critique is also about a dialogue, you're not in an exam situation or that sort, this is what I meant, trust your stuff. We have seen a number of things, and I rather have the opportunity to look the book up, about what this work is, and then talk to you, I had the chance to see, now I see it, rather than first I hear you.

EP. I mean, that's not how any of these talks, midterms, finals have gone. Every single one has begun with the artist talking about what they are producing, if I don't, then okay, I wont.

LBN. Edgar, you know that you have license to play with that, right?

AM. What do you think?

EP. No, I mean, I'm still in the institution, I mean I'm still going to be...

LBN. But, I think this is what Muntadas meant earlier, you should be aware of these things.

HM. I think for me, as an outsider, it is just more the disconnect between the kind of things you were talking about, and then what we looked at, the kind of things you were talking about had a certain kind of rhetorical, right now-ness, you know, about architecture and space, and the relationship of art and space, and then even the traveling and the sort of globalism, but then the work, is, does have this real seventies feel, the diary feels super intimate, the scale of the book is really intimate, the way you've printed the photographs on the page is really intimate, and you know, even that sort of doubling, the intimacy of this monitor, with your hands looking down, and there are a lot of, to me it feels like, again, I go back to these formal things, there is a bit of a lack of resolution for me, in some of the formal choices that you've made, that are not commensurate with your verbal history of the work.

EP. Maybe I am just a bad speaker.

HM. I think that's too defensive of a position to take. I think it may just be that, maybe, the ideas in your head may be very public, but the experience of the work is incredibly private, and there is a space there, and what do you do with that space?

LBN. But if you look at the narcissistic, at that dynamic, if you look at Rita Ackerman, Dash Snow, all these people who kind of, ...

EP. I don't know who any of those people are.

LBN. Well, hopefully you will, eventually. I mean, they are just contemporaries, people whom are operating now who kind of use daily life, and they bring you into it. It is something to consider, I mean, where is the critique in that?

SP. I think Edgar actually tried to make a context because this project also survives in relation to his earlier projects that we can access on the website, and if we actually go there, this is actually very interesting to see as a concept of sculpture, or a special concept, or as an experience for the viewer, and maybe that is what it is like because it is very densely rich to see how he transformed this idea that he has of sites into a book, ...

AM. This is the result of Hamill Fulton's books. I mean, this has been, its not to say its been done or can't be done, you need to magnify the experience, as a visual thing, and then, that's the work. And the book is totally a heritage of the artist's books of the seventies, ...

UMB. Which is fine.

AM. Its fine, but I think you need to be positioned, I mean, what I'm surprised that you don't even acknowledge, that you don't know these people. I mean, I think your work is pretty genuine, but you need to position, in a way how, we see the history and the background.

JG. I think, its, you're presentation style is just kind of taken to the extreme, the mode of the program, where you are steeped in cerebral kind of understanding of everything, and it is welcome what is construed to be a narcissistic, solipsistic, approach, but, I think it is also important to create a context, where there isn't necessarily one, and the artists in the world are lucky to have a context created for them, and I like the example of Mike Kelley who had to create a context, to write about his work in a theoretical way, because no one knew how to write about it or think about it, and so they weren't paying any attention to it, but on the other hand, maybe there is already a context created that isn't necessarily your context and maybe it really isn't understood, I mean it could be looked at differently, and maybe just not as a

seventies throwback, but I don't know because I haven't looked at it enough. So, I like to think there could be fiction in there, because I don't know whether it is true or not.

Selected Criticism & A Posterior Response

AMC. Do you remember, when you were taking the photographs, what were you thinking, your ideas or your thoughts about art and architecture, sculpture and architecture, what are you trying to achieve through photographic work?

EP. I don't think that it was photographing particular objects, I was trying to be very objective, about, I mean, simply not looking through the viewfinder, and not just stopping at certain points, I do not think that it was portraiture, I think of it as something else,

AM. Visually, the subjective and objective data, and the way, to produce that as a book, and a book is actually objective to somebody and is a personal experience, to read the book, to me it comes more as an experiential document that is kind of a diary, it's your own diary, and I wonder, and I think, if this is something that you wonder, for your work, is where you locate the audience? For whom you do the things? I have the feeling that some, and most of the time, you do it for yourself. Its fine, but I think you need to talk more about that. Because if you see a Richard Long, or a Hamill Fulton work, you know, I think, they declare it is their own experience, and you never talk about that. I think you should talk more about that, because I think it is what sustains your work, because the book, I am not so sure is the work, the work is your experience. I don't know how you've related that to sculpture.

A great deal of preparing Text 11: Site Translations was the mediation of personal experience. In the several weeks spent traveling across Korea and Japan, it became difficult to distinguish at which points I was working and at which I was not. The photographs used in the final book, as well as the photographs and notes found in the supplementary materials span the entire range of the day, with the exception of the sleeping hours. In this respect, it is difficult not to engage in a discussion of biography, and in the context of a book, the diary. There are certain similarities between this work and the aforementioned.

The objective, then, may be seen as a perversion of the subjective. It is difficult to say whether a litany of restrictions or boundaries renders the subjective objective. I do not believe that was the intention of Text 11, this transformation.

Process and Resolve

The book Text 11: Site Translations underwent several transitions.

A major purpose of the trip was the selection of a site. The previous project Site 9: Indefensible Structures. The inquiry that was previous to the development of the project was limited, in the sense that a site visit nor the selection of a finite area was made.

The study began with a loose site visit that would take place over the Independent Activities Period of 2007. In determining the location for the site visit, several considerations took place. The region that I determined would be suitable to visit was the Korean Peninsula and the southern islands of Japan, although the only true determination would be my flying into Seoul in late December and returning from Seoul in early February.

The daily practice then became navigation through Seoul without maps and pre printed materials. I began to create my own materials in the form of medium format photographs and corresponding gps coordinates. The film employed was Kodak Portra 400NC and the camera a Woca 120. The original plan was to capture one roll of film per day.

Secondary photographs with time/ date stamps were also captured using a compact digital camera with a 5.1 Megapixel count. The camera model was Samsung DigiMax S500. These items numbered 1089 taken throughout the length of the site visit. Several of these items also were movie files recorded at the resolution of 640x480i at 30 frames a second. Several of these movie files were later joined and edited into the short film A LIMITED ENGAGEMENT OF SEVERAL YEARS OR MORE CIRCA 2006 ANNO DOMINI.

Technical problems encountered throughout the length of the project were the loss of satellite signal on the GPS receiver. The shutter of the WOCA 120 was also frequently prone to jamming. This resulted in unexposed frames of the twelve available frames available on the roll. This also resulted in double exposures due to the lack of confirmation that one particular exposure was made.

The raw material for the site study was completed by the date of return.

Study for Casablanca: Maps for Access and Improvised Housing 2006 / 2007

Continuing to look at the exchange between visual art and architecture, I have begun a course of work that looks at the state of improvised housing and social conditions in Casablanca, Morocco. This work initially begun in the fall of 2006 wherein I took the course From Theory To Practice: Structuring Low Income Housing In Developing Countries. In the course, I researched economic interventions to address the conditions of improvised housing and slum upgrading in Morocco.

In the past year, I have attempted to develop models of cultural interventions through the production of objects and planning. Through these projects and progressively moving from one the former to the latter, I have become increasingly invested in process and how it determines the form of a project.

The current project I am developing continues to define the space between the various fields of visual art, architecture, and planning. In it, I am ultimately seeking to address the conditions of improvised housing and slum upgrading through the process of a project based intervention. In the project Site 09: Indefensible Structures, initial research was followed with the form of the object and intervention in a matter of months. The project was focused on the development of an object without strenuously, although not completely, questioning the need or conditions of the site where the project would exist.

I sought to remedy this methodology of working in the following project Text 11: Site Translations. In developing a possible project for the site of the Republic of Korea, I visited the location developing an initial catalog of maps consisting of photographs, notes, and coordinates. The result was a book decidedly set upon prefacing a project as the process to a work, but becoming the object itself in that process.

In *Study For Casablanca: Maps for Access and Improvised Housing*, I am seeking to build on the previous studies I have undertaken on the state of improvised housing in Morocco. I see it as my first step in the production of the project to develop the process leading to the project's conclusion. Thus far, I have found my limited knowledge of the aerial view of Casablanca has led to my needing to produce maps that display the aerial view. This also demands understanding the aerial view of slums in and around the urban center. The project thus far has been the production of these maps from stills captured in Google Earth. The following step is the translation of these maps into graphics that demonstrate the massing and accessibility of slums and centers of improvised housing in the city.

I will look upon the completion of these initial studies as direction and discourse for how to continue in the development of a forthcoming project for the site of Morocco. Subsequent to the process of this work, I have also come to understand the preparation of projects as works themselves yet indebted to the production of the forthcoming.

Discussion and Criticism

SMVisS Masters Of Science In Visual Studies Fall Final Panel Review

Participants In Review: Ute Meta Bauer, Maria Magdalena Campos, Alia Farid, Andrea Frank, Joe Gibbons, Kate James, Wendy Jacob, Joan Jonas, Jin Jung, Jae Rhim Lee, Charlie Mathis, Regina Moeller, Stephen Prina, Alexander Rosenberg, Joe Zane

Date: 14 December 2007

Time: 10:37am

Location: 265 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02141 Building N52-315

Source: Transcribed from a video recording taken by Joseph Gibbons

Camera Type: Sanyo Xacti VPCHD700

10:37am

EP. So that when I do arrive at making a decision about what I'll do, that I'll be satisfied in my taking part in it. So, this all being slum upgrading and improvised housing research in Morocco and at that point I didn't try to locate this with my artistic practice as a sculptor, but as I'm beginning to learn more about, I thought that there could be some physical manifestation of edifice to try to address this social, the social and economic climate in and through an object. So what I've been doing this semester is looking at the aerial view and planning and looking at how slums and the massings of building are located around each other and trying to develop the tools to better ... produce, so what I have are some visualizations, some photographs, some materials that you can flip through if you want.

JJ. So, can you talk a little bit about exactly what we are seeing?

EP. We are looking at a view of Tangier from the Northern edge to the Southern edge, and these are basically two visualizations that I've produced to be figure ground relationships of everything that is the built environment and everything that is landscape, which is to say the road or an open field. In this one everything that is built is black and everything that is ground is white. In this one the buildings are actually colored and detailed and the ground is white. I tried, I developed these first from these really large maps that I produced. How I produced these maps, I had to go into Google Earth and capture thousands of images and stitch them together, so these maps could be printed out twenty feet, thirty feet tall and still be really sharp. I tried to do the same to some effect in print form but I'm still trying to work it out perfectly because it's really difficult. Video produces this look which is difficult to get in print, so ...

SP. So how many images are in there?

EP. Like one thousand.

JRL. And how did you create the video?

EP. From taking a small section of a map and importing it into Final Cut Pro and then just panning across the image

MMC. So then actually, what you are presenting here is a virtual territory that is not a place that exists as such, or is that actually a recreation of a landscape of a site that really, we could

locate it? I know that it is Morocco, but it is created from how many images, I mean you collaged a map and created a new map, that's correct?

EP. Oh, no, no, its real.

MMC. That's real, that's what I wanted to know, its exactly the same, but you altered, right. I'm trying to understand the process and the why, because my question was, is this is Google Earth because it has this kind of feeling, I see it, because of the modification, but what is it, in the end, what is this map proposing to me? What does it mean after that?

EP. Yeah, I mean, what I'm trying to do is lengthen my process in arriving at a sculpture and saying this is my final product. And so I'm trying to develop smaller research projects in arriving at that, what I think it would be in the end is some kind of physical intervention that would be in the realm of developing some sort of vernacular architecture or vernacular construction where this construction would be delegating the role of affecting the social and political climate and that those environments would be reflected in this built thing. What I'm thinking is why I'm so interested in looking at the aerial view and how buildings are grouped together that I, that through all of this research I'm starting to figure out that the development of roads, the development of infrastructure has a great effect on if slums develop or not and how slums are built around infrastructure and how site and services are laid out and so I'm thinking very early on, something that would be in the future that if there were to be some sort of physical intervention, that might be something to consider, after having done this. Because if I were to say I'm going to, and this is what would have happened three years ago, I'm going to build a sculpture in Morocco, okay, its going to be a tall box that's going to have these windows in it, that has nothing to do with, you know ... just out of the sky, kind of, but I'm really trying to locate and be very sensitive to developing interventions and sculptures now.

SP. Have you conducted any studies in Tangier?

EP. Have I been to Tangier? No, I've completely been offsite.

SP. Is that an important part of your work?

EP. Yeah, hopefully I'm planning to move to Morocco next year.

SP. Oh, I see. I thought it was an important component that you do not visit it, well I know, you were perhaps planning not to.

EP. No, no, no, no, that would be an ...

SP. ... an entirely different thing, okay.

UMB. Can you speak a bit more about your process?

EP. So, I mean, like part of all, like I'm saying, trying to increase my process to develop these really, I because I'm trying to develop works that are really engaged with these social and economic and political climates, so not only how does this physical intervention deal with architecture and cultural context but how does it deal with all of the different aspects of society. So these are all just different case studies that I have read on Moroccan slums and urban development in Northern Africa. These are put out by World Bank, Cities Without Slums, these are just World Bank loans over the past twenty years that I've been reading. I started learning Arabic

so that I could speak Arabic when I go there. I wrote a Fulbright Grant so that I could move to Morocco. Last week in the New York Times Magazine ...

Selected Criticism & A Posterior Response

MMC. So then actually, what you are presenting here is a virtual territory that is not a place that exists as such, or is that actually a recreation of a landscape of a site that really, we could locate it? I know that it is Morocco, but it is created from how many images, I mean you collaged a map and created a new map, that's correct?

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The maps developed during Study For Casablanca were in fact the composite of true aerial views. These aerial views could not though be considered as natural, as they do not represent the birds eye view and are mediated through a mechanical/ digital device. The unaltered maps, as well as the maps subject to modification, themselves do nothing. It is the interpretation of these maps that may or may not lead to results, in navigation, construction, or destruction. Although the modification of the maps is meant to identify one particular characteristic as can be seen from the aerial view, building massings, the modified maps cannot speak a universal truth.

Process and Resolve

A great deal of the critique of project three has focused on the issues of process and scale.

The scale of the work has been limited to the vastness of the aerial view. The videos produced of Casablanca's aerial view produce a constant pan that sweeps from the northern shore to the southern edges of the city. The elevation of the "camera" remains constant at 660m. At this height buildings become reduced to geometric shapes and roads are viewed as winding lines intersecting with groupings of rectangles.

For the city of Casablanca in Google Earth, 660 meters is the elevation at which the recorded resolution for aerial photography ceases to improve. This information is accurate as of October 2007.

This elevation notices the presence of motor vehicles, large patches of vegetation, and the appearance of slums. This elevation also excludes the appearance of people, if included, they appear as a speck relative in color their reflection as small (comparatively) as a needlepoint or grain of sand. The aggregate color of the landscape also obscures the distinction between road and building. The aerial view, of this urban region, produces a reddish / burnt sienna cast.

The foundation of the work was the capture of singular images from Google Earth at the elevation of 660m. The images would represent the broken grid of urban Casablanca. The images would accumulate into the low thousands. These images were then digitally stitched to one another producing wider images that retained the quality of the close up. The larger images could then be introduced as stills into a non linear video editing system and then panned across. The result would be a mobile birds eye view that retained constant elevation and speed. The digital environment then became ideal for this project as real attempts at aerial capture would introduce variables over which there are varying levels of control.

The aerial view, though, continued to communicate through a vocabulary that remained fogged due to the general cast of light and color. In order to distinguish the source material, as well as the altered view, the original aerial view would be processed through color correction software that addressed the hue cast and the density of all gray values.

The keystone of producing this work came from the idea that the aerial view, manipulated, could communicate certain characteristics with greater speed and clarity. This would also come at the sacrifice of other characteristics. The project sought to identify the common massing typologies of buildings in Casablanca. This would require that the aerial view reduce its detailed mode of capture to the nature of figure / ground.

We come to the issue of scale. Although the project was meant to address the scale of the aerial view and the ability to identify large quarters of the built environment at one time, the importance of human scale cannot be excluded from the discourse of the work. In fact, it is the human scale that conditions the large and small for consumption from grade level and 660m. I am resolute to introduce the human scale as it relates to improvised housing and urban expansion in the following project.

Also as part of project three, plotted photographs are produced that represent the whole of Casablanca as the unaltered aerial as well as through varying levels of close up in the figure ground. The photograph measure thirty inches by forty inches and both appear in color and black and white.

This project is a response to a continuing interest in the depiction of housing developments in northern Africa, specifically Morocco. My research into the region began in the fall of two thousand and six through coursework in From Theory To Practice: Structuring Low Income Housing In Developing Countries. My readings into the region were primarily focused on slum upgrading programs. The work also occurs aside a parallel project on northern Africa; the writing of a research grant to study the education gap, which excludes the informally employed from financial institutions and other forms of credit that can lead to home ownership. The research would be primarily conducted in the urban centers of Morocco such as Casablanca and Rabat.

Lavon, Texas – Levittown, New York 2008

Through the processes of photographic documentation, I am looking to produce a close up of housing at its points of expansion and egress.

The theme of the work continues to be focused on low income and improvised housing.

This work, as opposed to previous documentation projects will focus on the human scale.

This project continues to straddle the fringes of documentation, archive, and the catalog.

I think this projects interpretation would be widely varied based on the location of the photographs.

The photographs would hope to see how others come and go around other peoples homes and how the owners maintain and exit their property.

I want to show these photographs as slide projections. I also hope to show the amount of photographs that would demonstrate a single day.

I am worried the execution of this work and the presentation will manifold over the content of the work.

My original intention was to demonstrate these spaces as how they exist in developing countries. The space would be the edge and expansion of large urban centers. The inability to arrive at these locales presently, I have expanded my focus onto locales in the United States that also demonstrate the characteristics of these spaces.

These domestic spaces would be, but not solely limited to, ones that currently represent the built environment but have since fallen into a state of disrepair and have been adopted as alternative spaces of vacancy, settlements that have gone abandoned due to the population dearth in industrial and manufacturing centers, or the rapidly expanding exurb settlements that represent the housing bubble of the 2000s.

In the second context, the project looks to examples of housing transformation such as if Pruitt Igoe would not have been destroyed or if the exodus to suburban environments then reversed leaving these spaces for reoccupation.

The project cannot help but consider the issues of population and how these demographics are ever expanding. The use and development of housing is a direct correlative to this. It also cannot be speculated that population has not reached a cap or ceiling either in the developing or modernized nations.

The presentation would pivot on eighteen slide projectors each displaying eighty slides in a carousel. Each projector would represent an hour and twenty minutes, 12:00 AM - 01:20 AM for example. All eighteen would represent the enumerative photographs of one day.

I am left with the question, what is the use of illustration? Does it change, qualify, or distort any set of existing or hypothesized truths.

Discussion and Criticism, Instance One

SMVisS Masters Of Science In Visual Studies Spring Midterm Panel Review

Participants In Review: Ute Meta Bauer, Caitlin Berrigan, Andrea Frank, Joseph Gibbons, Kate James, Amber Frid Jiminez, Joan Jonas, Jin Jung, Matthew Mazzotta, Kevin Moore, Antoni Muntadas, Jae Rhim Lee, Sofia Ponte, Alexander Rosenberg, Joe Zane

Date: 11 March 2008

Time: 03:22pm

Location: 265 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02141 Building N52-315

Source: Transcribed from a video recording taken by Joseph Gibbons

Camera Type: Sanyo Xacti VPCHD700

03:22pm

AM. I think this kind of work is about determination, how can we understand that this is another thing? Outside, I mean my closest example is thinking of any of the minimalist group of Carl Andre and ...

JJ. No, Im talking about Dan Graham.

AM. And Sol Lewitt, No Dan Graham is another poetic, is another poetic. He has much more, he is interested in rock and roll and religion and other things. Its about the structures, you know, the serial structure and its more close to certain work of 70s minimalism, you know...

UMB. But there is a different dimension because it is a real place, a real comment and its, and that bothers me because floor plates do not really bother me and numbers reading forwards and backwards of On Kawara, one minute here is a task, I have no problem with that, but there is something, it looks like minimal art, it looks like conceptual art, but it has content.

AM. Many people of the 70s were bothered by On Kawara.

UMB. Yes, but this is not only boring, there is content in it, and the content, to say the projections, to have surveillance of these suburbs, and about the people, but I don't see a single person, and to capture every minute, to me it is a totalitarian project, I'm sorry, that's not conceptual, but it is for me scary.

JJ. Well maybe, maybe its what we see.

UMB. ... it has the total eye, like and then this projection, to me it has, I don't know, to me that's very scary.

AM. Architects, they use mapping all the time, and you take classes with the city planners, no?

EP. Yes.

AM. And how do they relate to this work?

EP. Oh, this work has not been discussed with them. From working in that field a little bit, like I mean a lot of it is collecting samples and data, that becomes...

KJ. But theirs is so much more about the content and yours is much more about you and the system. I think Muntadas is saying something true there that there is a certain despotism about it though, that you come in, and the site doesn't even matter, okay, Morocco, sure, we'll do that now, okay we'll do a suburb or an exurb over here in Las Vegas. There is a certain placelessness and contentlessness to it, that it's about you, I think, more than anything, it's about your hand in this.

03:25pm

UMB. It's well articulated, it's not an attack, it's very worked through, each project is carefully thought through, and a long time is spent on a project.

JZ. Each minimalist project is very thought through too, and that was done thirty years ago. It's just cleverly thought through.

UMB. But I don't think the project, the presentation is the project.

JZ. Yeah.

AF. The fact that he doesn't have one image, he could have gone to a master settlement, right, and got us some examples, maybe a five minute, right, just to show us what it is going to look like on this, but it didn't do that because it feels like you really are into repetition, structure, and perfectional forms, which was with the google maps, the same thing, all of these formal aspects were much more important to the rest, it seemed to me and I, and I couldn't, I always had a hard time relating what you write and say with what I see.

UMB. This is what I mean.

AF. And maybe what we have to look at the work as is, and, but if I think this, then I get confused or I get impatient, because why not video, and why not all kinds of places, why one corner, what does this one corner say, are you expecting somebody to fix their window while you are shooting that one minute and not the,you know, there is, there are these, the form doesn't fit what you are trying to do, what you say you are trying to do, but you want the form clearly, but you also interested in the content, so.

UMB. But maybe not, and maybe it is like, this is maybe that, this is what his troubles are like, cause when you hear, then this. The previous year, there was this statement, then we saw something, it did not relate, maybe forget about giving us a context, what it should be, and really just show the work.

KM. I guess, I have a question about, so you propose to, so the great thing, if I were you, to propose this one day project, what is great is I have free all my other days for exploration and I don't see that enthusiasm for exploration, like I'd love to see a test run from ten different places from the past ten days somewhere around here, of doing this shot, this serial shot, in the same spot.

KJ. But, Edgar, for how long have you know you were going to do this project, didn't you come into MIT knowing you were going to do this project?

EP. I mean, I came into MIT knowing I was going to work within a, I knew I wanted to work with art and architecture, which is why I came here.

KJ. I don't think Edgar does exploration. I think Edgar gets his idea and does his idea, and that's it. There is no exploration, or if there is, it's a very internal exploration.

UMB. There is a perfection in your way, of how it is, there is the form of the project and there is nothing wrong with that, if it says it is ..., but my problem is that it has a so called narrative, and a length to it, and I think that that is it.

EP. But does that mean it cannot still exist as both, because people will see this without me.

UMB. Yes, but, I read this text and then I see that and I think does it mean documentation, all of the documentation in the world, does it mean this way it works, where is the human scale, I mean you want to raise all of these questions, but I don't get where is the work, is this the work, is the performance the work, or is like the proposal the conceptual work, but I'm confused...

AF. I mean, take your travel piece, right, where you have every position, and we had this place, and we had that place, instead of places, you are giving us times, and these lists seem very important, they have their own myth to them, and you show them as performance, you are in love with them, and you know, maybe it's the wrong word, you want to spell them out, you're spelling them out, you're not saying one to two twenty, projection one, it could be easy, but no, you're writing every minute which represents every slide, and that shows us that it is all about form.

UMB. It is not only about form.

AM. I think that probably when none of us see you, you are probably doing some abstract expressionistic project, to liberate yourself.

KJ. Ha ha ha ha.

03:32pm

AM. Because if not, you're meant to suffer a lot ... no, the next paragraph, what about illustration, "I'm left with the question, what is the use of illustration."

EP. I sometimes feel that is what I'm doing, all I'm doing is illustration.

AM. But, this, I question the work of illustration, because illustration, I think is to complement with image, for example, I think, take the visual as illustration, something in the text, I think you, I don't know if you complement, or just, to, give an entity. And I think this is what Ute, kind of related to surveillance, or control.

AFJ. What happens when your system breaks?

EP. What do you mean?

AFJ. I mean this is programmatic, its asking of a computer program, what happens when it breaks?

EP. I don't believe it is a program ...

AFJ. No, no, its going to break. Everything breaks.

EP. Do you mean, like, a slide projector will break?

JRL. Because its never been tested; how does it break if it's never been tested?

AFJ. I mean, if you go out and do this, there are inevitable inaccuracies.

JJ. Do you mean in the final presentation, synchronizing all the projectors?

AFJ. I mean,

EP. I mean, I think its human error, its not a computer, if its all the hand. Its all art, it is all a brushstroke.

AFJ. Its not always that, isn't it?

EP. Yeah.

AFJ. I don't think so...

EP. Oh, I mean, I was saying that it is, ... I mean she was saying "what happens when the computer program or what happens when this automation breaks down, when the system has a flaw" and then I, I mean you may argue otherwise, but I never conceived of it as perfect, because I considered it flawed, I mean it's a brushstroke, its all done by hand, so I would attribute any flaw or that any two slides may appear as 12:02 or 12:03, because I went to the bathroom, and that may actually be the case, but that's human error, I think its unique in that these rules or these sets of instructions if they were given to someone else to make this project, its absolutely not going to be the same, so ...

SP. So, Edgar, what is the next lie you want us to believe?

EP. The next slide?

SP. Lie.

EP. Lie? I, I don't even, I don't know how to respond to that.

JJ. Well, no, did you mean the system of projectors or the whole system?

AFJ. I mean the whole system.

JJ. Because the projection system is going to be very very, I mean James Colin has a terrible time coordinating slides, the slide projections.

AFJ. I mean people, what it brings up for me, is that people spend so much time building systems, correcting systems, that you do to fight against bugs and flaws, and inevitably you're unmatched, and im wondering , they build human systems, computing systems, voting systems, any kind of a system will eventually crash, and I just want to know, sort of a, for you theoretically, where is the crash? Like what is that for you?

CB. I think this relates to what I was saying in studio, which was that, all this whole idea, this system of enumeration that reveals something, and you are trying to get at what, and then it

doesn't actually reveal a subject, and just by totalitarianism, things that have perfect control or can't have perfect control, and in the end obliterates the subject, and that it didn't mean to do so, so isn't that, but I don't know if that crash or that moment of obliteration is actually a part of your practice and that's what I find so depressing, in that there is no human ...

UMB. But it's a decider, and I see your offering, that "something troubles me", it's the ..., a perception of seeing the way of what you do, and that's not what it is about, but it's how you present it, you know, and what I read, additionally what you want to do is something different than what you present, but I'm stuck with what you present, so I react to what you present. It was also last year's project that I found very interesting in the presentation, and it was again about a place you have never been, but you were in control, in google, so there was always this kind of surveillance, this controlling, perfect system, and this is, again, just what I repeated. That's not negative, it can be good, that control.

JRL. I feel like it has to get out of fantasy even for us to even consider whether to give it a break or not, because it still is in fantasy mode, we have yet to see anything that would work or would exist outside of your mental space, and that's where it has to go for you and for us to consider it even more than just observing your presentation, I mean, I feel like it's even pointless for you to try to locate a space or city for you to use because it's still here, you know what I mean, it hasn't ...

AM. I think that the descriptions made of the work and the text creates the expectation that, that, because disciplines like city planning, and semiology, and that, then you could deliver, and I think your delivery is a landscape, the landscape of artists of the 70s and, I think pretty much, I am trying to position, I think I make an effort myself to find, because I wonder how you could defend all this, and I think it is, I see that you need to take a position and I think it's, you need to write about and you need to say, because I think it's a, it's a, it's difficult to, especially when you've seen some work, one work, when you see a retrospective of the work I think it makes sense, because you start to see it's a totally a concentration of things,anyway, are we finished here?

EP. Thank you.

Discussion and Criticism, Instance Two

SMVisS Masters Of Science In Visual Studies Spring Final Panel Review

Participants In Review: Dennis Adams, Saeed Arida, Ute Meta Bauer, Caitlin Berrigan, Annatina Caprez, Piotr Chizinski, Alia Farid, Andrea Frank, Joseph Gibbons, Dabney Hailey, Wendy Jacob, Kate James, Amber Frid Jiminez, Joan Jonas, Jin Jung, Jae Rhim Lee, Matthew Mazzotta, Kevin Moore, Antoni Muntadas, Jae Rhim Lee, Jegan Vincent De Paul, Sofia Ponte, Alexander Rosenberg, Gedminas Urbonas, Nomedas Urbonas, Severin Wirz, Joe Zane

Date: 16 May 2008

Time: 10:50am

Location: 265 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02141 Building N52-315

Source: Transcribed from several video recordings and an audio recording taken by Joseph Gibbons

Camera Type: Canon VIXIA HF10, EDIROL R-09, Sanyo Xacti VPC HD1A, Sanyo Xacti VPCHD700

10:50am

EP. So, I think what, what this project ends up becoming, I don't feel like this is an intervention yet, that it is trying to produce a result, like some of my other projects, like the result of my project last semester, which was looking at Casablanca from the aerial view, and you could start to differentiate between the formal settlements and the slums by the way that the buildings are massed together, so the solution that could come from that, or at least one that could be guessed, to solve this problem, would be to develop a road system or a system of infrastructure, and that was without a site visit, this is almost going even further back, to say the possible intervention or the possible, because the problem is, there was a problem I wanted to look at and the problem was Lavon, its this exurb community that might become a slum, the reason is that a developer plans 300 homes, by the time he has built 200, only 100 have been sold, in the past 3 years, so its almost like a ghost town, only 100 homes are filled and 300 planned, and 100 are empty, and so, and all of the people that do live there are still commuting to Dallas, so what I wanted to do, just this semester was to just go and visit and see the place and talk to people and take some photographs, but I imagined, I think this is a discussion, of the exurbs, that is happening in a lot of places of the west and the south that is going to continue, and I would like to continue working with the idea, with the topic, I feel free to go to Lavon as frequently as I like, I've talked to the mayor, the sheriff, they know that people are worried about them at MIT, the city planners. The way that I wanted to look at Lavon before, as I discussed a couple of months ago, that I wanted to go there, I had never been to the place, id only read a few articles in regional newspapers in Texas, it was featured in the New York Times, I thought I would go there and document the one location, and I thought the solution to the problem or finding the solution to the problem, would be photographing the main intersection and maybe looking at the movement over an entire day and photographing that entire day, I went there and it was in north Texas, I kind of already knew it was incredibly sparse, and that was, it just wasn't something that fit, it was something that I realized it was something I realized that was wrong, and I just wanted to show some of the different actions that were happening in Lavon, and this resulted in photographing multiple sites, I was going to photograph all eighteen sites in Lavon, after nine I felt I had enough, at that point I realized to show how Lavon was functioning or dysfunctioning, I would want to have a contrast to that, and so I was thinking of an exurb that has survived and is flourishing, and since become a suburb, that's what happens when an exurb grows, and then I was thinking about, I had already heard a lot about Levittown, several years ago, it was one of the first very large scale master planned communities for the returning soldiers from World War II,

which was made on Long Island by Joseph Levitt, and its incredibly monotonous in the way it was planned, but Levittown fifty years later, its difficult to say it was a success and its difficult to say it was a failure because its completely populated, the median average for a home is half a million dollars, but at the same time its incredibly insular and the economy is a little slow, and people still commute very heavily to New York City, so it still functions like a suburb, I'm not trying to present two polar opposites but a case of a burgeoning exurb that is literally only twenty or thirty months old, and then also a community that is not a major metropolitan area but has been established and functioning for fifty or sixty years, and trying to learn about one by looking at the other, and trying to have them work together, and so id like to, I'm working on developing a case study of Lavon, part of that was going there and taking these photographs, and I mean I'm doing this as an artist, but I'm very interested in city planning, and I've worked in city planning last summer in New Orleans with Jae Rhim, and continuing in that field, very consciously as an artist , but trying to produce creative solutions for another field.

AM. Where did you photograph without getting a single person? It is more difficult to make sixteen sets of photographs without people than with people.

EP. I was in Lavon during the day, everyone who lives in Lavon, during the day is in Dallas, so your kind of by yourself except for the local constable and the mothers who are staying home taking care of the babies. I hardly saw any men there except for the local constable during the day, and the men who were there were the Mexican workers who were building the houses, there was only one house being built while the time I was there. Because there are so many that are empty.

DA. What is the hope for this project, I don't understand any stake in it, what is your stake in the project, I don't understand.

EP. I would like to maybe develop a plan for Lavon on how to increase the economic stability of this place, or how to bring businesses there, or how to get more people to live there.

DA. So you have a real utilitarian agenda. How does that, how does that interface with an artistic project, or is that an artistic project, or are there two parts?

EP. I mean, I think the role, of me, is one of working with both, because along the way, I think the solutions that I would develop would be ones that, from some one who has been trained as an artist, not solely trained as a city planner, but I mean also to develop these presentations that are, sometimes useful, sometimes immediately not useful, to that other field it is trying to serve; because I am also very interested in beauty.

JJ. I thought your presentation was interesting, almost comic because you started showing the slides, the same slide, over and over again. Anyway, I'm interested in the idea of your presentation, to whom are you presenting, if you presented that to people who come to open stores, it might not work, the lack of a kind of presentation. I also expected the slides to be changing, I was wondering why we weren't seeing exactly that presentation.

EP. I think that, this is part of what happened. I wanted to show an entire day of photographs, every single minute for twenty four hours, and that's how many fill up eighteen slide projectors like I have. Umm, in that scenario, it would have been interesting for them to be synchronized and showing repeatedly, I mean, but what happened is I went to this place and I only wanted to show a few sites, and it really didn't make any sense to try to develop a system for that, saying this is over the course of an hour or over the course of three hours, but maybe, because these photographs will go along with a book that shows the kind of coordinates and where its located

and what time of day, to kind of show that kind of traffic in that area, so I just tried to shoot the photographs as quickly as possible at one site, so this becomes the intersection of Main and Houston at 03:05pm to 03:07 and this is the other intersection at that time, instead of having it become more abstract and intangible.

DA. But there is a difference between, if the intention is down the line to make intervention, as you said in this community, and we will leave it for later whether this is about utility or some kind of artistic vision, that's one thing, but when you position it against Levittown, then this piece falls into some kind of comparative narrative, which seems to me, a completely separate project, and I can't put those projects together so well, both may be interesting, or could become interesting, but seems at odds within me, I don't know where to station myself as a viewer and as a participant in your piece it seems like it's a bit all over the place.

DH. I think the same way, I was struck by trying to figure out who your audience is, because here you have this very particular audience, and I don't think, I actually really liked the physicality of this presentation, the heat, and the rounded corners, we were all talking so much afterwards about your suit and we all felt like it was something that came out of the seventies, in a way, because of those rounded corners, and the use of slides, and I liked all of that, it made me more interested in the images, and I was trying to figure out the whole space, like an installation, so it surprises me a little to hear about the very ambitious goal of the project, because you're clearly really interested in all of these details and facts, I was surprised too to hear that you have a lot of hope for this community, and you want to help transform to a place where people can live. So I too think it's all over the place and I'm trying to figure out how you can, I want to hear about, if it's this big, what is this particular strand, maybe contain it a little bit.

EP. It's the very beginning.

DH. Yeah, yeah.

DA. So it's still in the research phase?

EP. Oh, absolutely, absolutely.

UMB. But that's not completely true, because you have like the ongoing project, in a way, and we are each year...

EP. Well, this is...

UMB. So, there is also continuation, you shift to another project, but you are still informed by what you get from the previous project, I think that's crucial to mention maybe for the reviewers. When you did Morocco, this basically, that would not have happened, if you did not do Morocco.

EP. Absolutely, I mean, I think what has happened is that my level of investment in these places I discuss has basically increased exponentially, because my very first semester here, I was trying to develop a vernacular architecture for Angola, and Iraq, and Chad, where they have oil exports, but then the money from these oil exports goes back to fueling civil war, so I developed this building material between petroleum and concrete, so you make buildings out of it, and so instead of developing a program of sustainability, these buildings regulate their own destruction over time, and so the people who see this are supposed to realize that ... and then social change happens. I had never been there. In only reading about, that was very shocking to me at the end of that semester, and so I wanted to develop a sculpture in Korea for several reasons.

Instead of thinking of a project and a shape and a form, I thought I should go and spend six weeks there, and do nothing but research, coordinates, photographs, notes, and I did that. At the end I realized I can't make work here.

UMB. In Korea?

EP. Yeah.

UMB. South, North?

EP. Well in any place, I was in the south and north and Japan.

UMB. Which is not easy to access.

EP. Yeah, yeah.

DA. But because you have a global mindset, almost paranoid vision of the world, meaning that you're going to these sites trying to accommodate all of these things, it seems then that it has to have, and I like what Joan was saying, these things will never be realized, I would imagine, it's going to turn into, because there are so many of them, and you're going to so many places, and you're doing so many projects, that it becomes a kind of fantasy, you probably hate that, but okay, there's a kind of fantasy level to it, and it may call then for some kind, not just coming back empty handed, like it didn't work out or I got a few photographs, but then to put that into some kind of performative model, which you are already kind of moving towards, something that would then recapture that, and even filter in your sense of loss about what you were trying to do, all the problematics of the project could be performed, and it could have a very real life, and that could be what is instrumental, not whether you are going to help some people out in the suburbs, you know, they are on their own, please, you can't do anything, but you could through the use of metaphor and performance, you could bring something back to another audience and tell the story and become a great storyteller.

GU. The performative is on the stage.

DA. Yeah.

AM. I appreciate after the midterm you go back to the United States, after the mega model situation of North Korea, and Mexico, and Morocco, because I think it's closer and I think you know more than these countries that you really don't know.

EP. Well

AM. Let me finish, I think that's a very positive thing in a way that you are working in a more realistic situation, I feel the project that staying there between Home For America comes from Dan Graham, and seeing yesterday with Dennis the Chantal Ackerman, descriptive views of the east, or descriptive views of Tijuana, San Diego, it has something to do with there, but it's important with Chantal Ackerman, people, for you, it's more closer to Dan Graham, these empty spaces. I would like to see how you related that to your thesis, you are bringing the thesis in a few days, and after two years, how this work relates to that, and maybe you could tell us a little bit, just a little bit how you, general role or situation, to see how you could wrap together, all this.

EP. I mean, I think that it's from the role of an artist and it's about how the artist is able to try and pursue projects that are related either to their biography, to some social climate that it's in their

country, or to anything else, but really that but what every artist does is try to develop a periscope, that they that they look through, and so I mean, the way that I'm writing about my projects is that they become these tools for observation, and so how that an artist mediates everything that's around them, kind of like this fantasy, like I live here but I can go anywhere in the world, if I want. But being able to, I mean, how I write about my projects, how I choose them is being able to cut all of that down and focus on one place. Or. I mean, I think, I kind of embrace this you know megamaniacal way of working sometimes, of course that I could go anywhere and do anything that's very large, but I mean I really like to believe that there's a project that I could finish, like, like you said like coming back to the United States and in this place in Texas like I'm from Texas but five hours from here in Houston. And, I mean I felt it was more accessible, so to the project that started all of this work that I made in 2005 it was on it was in Mexico, you know where my family's from I made a huge sculpture that was supposed to be informed by the local political climate, the economic climate, the architectural space by using local materials, local labor, local money, and local design. And that's something that I finished. But that was, you know two years of work.

JJ. Where was that?

EP. It was in Central Mexico.

JJ. In a small town?

EP. In a very small town, actually it was in the middle of the desert.

DA. It was a beautiful project.

JJ. I think that you should have this double thing going on, in your work, the idea of the artist and this other idea that you have, of going into a community and helping them, because you obviously want to do that, but I think its very importantly to constantly shift back and forth, so that you have this, its very interesting as an artistic project, as Dennis was saying, I'm just sort of repeating what he said, but I think you don't have to give up, as people said, your megalomania,

EP. No, I think...

JJ. And constantly shift the material back and forth, because you might fail completely, in getting this community, maybe it's a useless project, to go into these communities and try to change things, but I think its useful, and on other levels, its not utilitarian, but its an artistic project, to bring it back into your practice as an artist, I just look at your persona today and who you were six months ago, and you got a real persona in there, that you create, you recreate yourself every six months, I don't know, I'm sure you know that, you're the same person, but you look different, so I get a different feeling from you, you know what I mean, so that's interesting, and I think you should go with that.

EP. I think, I m really heavily, going back to what the thesis is about, I think negotiating the two is a big part of it, what I think is purely, not visceral, but is for our consumption, what becomes utilitarian, I really wanted to go back between the two and find a space between the two, because I like embracing either.

UMB. But Edgar, with these, what you call creative solutions, or you look for creative solutions, but they are completely useless, and there is nothing wrong with that, and I prefer much more, and we are at a place that communicates itself to the world as a problem solver, MIT, and I think its

amazing to say, there are these big problems, and actually at the moment, there is no solution, and really admit that, rather than make me feel better, like, where is the problem set, and go to solve it, this is what I said, we are confronted all of the time with the world and the problems, and in a certain way, we know we cannot do anything, and we feel bad, and we try to overcome it, and I think to, just to show, I loved your installation about the Morocco project, and just I remembered much more how America approaches these places, through the CIA, through army surveillance, etc, and to me it was amazing to see it that way, it's the same way how you present that, and to me, I see all of these works as one approach to understand what is going on in the world, and for me, that's a lot, and how you as an artist encounter that, and I don't see you as a problem solver at all.

Selected Criticism & A Posterior Response, Instance One

UMB. But there is a different dimension because it is a real place, a real comment and its, and that bothers me because floor plates do not really bother me and numbers reading forwards and backwards of On Kawara, one minute here is a task, I have no problem with that, but there is something, it looks like minimal art, it looks like conceptual art, but it has content.

AM. Many people of the 70s were bothered by On Kawara.

UMB. Yes, but this is not only boring, there is content in it, and the content, to say the projections, to have surveillance of these suburbs, and about the people, but I don't see a single person, and to capture every minute, to me it is a totalitarian project, I'm sorry, that's not conceptual, but it is for me scary.

JJ. Well maybe, maybe its what we see.

It is the crux of this work to develop interdisciplinary ground between conceptual art and the field of planning; in this instance, conceptual art has provided the vehicle and the content through the latter field. The victimization of the landscape and communities is not the intention, the means of production have simply resulted in that appearance.

AF. And maybe what we have to look at the work as is, and, but if I think this, then I get confused or I get impatient, because why not video, and why not all kinds of places, why one corner, what does this one corner say, are you expecting somebody to fix their window while you are shooting that one minute and not the,you know, there is , there are these, the form doesn't fit what you are trying to do, what you say you are trying to do, but you want the form clearly, but you also interested in the content, so.

Developing a compromise between the form and the content was a struggle in working through Lavan, Texas - Levittown, New York. I do not believe there have been any sacrifices to either discipline, yet at this stage of the project, the primary audience whose accessibility to the work is greater is that of the creative field. This is not to say the installation does not function before a group of planners, in fact it does, yet it remains a gesture and observational study without supplementary data.

AM. But, this, I question the work of illustration, because illustration, I think is to complement with image, for example, I think, take the visual as illustration, something in the text, I think you, I don't know if you complement, or just, to, give an entity. And I think this is what Ute, kind of related to surveillance, or control.

AFJ. What happens when your system breaks?

EP. What do you mean?

AFJ. I mean this is programmatic, its asking of a computer program, what happens when it breaks?

EP. I don't believe it is a program ...

AFJ. No, no, its going to break. Everything breaks.

EP. Do you mean, like, a slide projector will break?

JRL. Because its never been tested; how does it break if it's never been tested?

AFJ. I mean, if you go out and do this, there are inevitable inaccuracies.

JJ. Do you mean in the final presentation, synchronizing all the projectors?

AFJ. I mean,

EP. I mean, I think its human error, its not a computer, if its all the hand. Its all art, it is all a brushstroke.

AFJ. Its not always that, isn't it?

EP. Yeah.

AFJ. I don't think so...

EP. Oh, I mean, I was saying that it is, ... I mean she was saying "what happens when the computer program or what happens when this automation breaks down, when the system has a flaw" and then I, I mean you may argue otherwise, but I never conceived of it as perfect, because I considered it flawed, I mean it's a brushstroke, its all done by hand, so I would attribute any flaw or that any two slides may appear as 12:02 or 12:03, because I went to the bathroom, and that may actually be the case, but that's human error, I think its unique in that these rules or these sets of instructions if they were given to someone else to make this project, its absolutely not going to be the same, so ...

Error in illustration is an impossibility. A grouping of autonomous mechanical devices does not represent a system. Failure should always remain an expectancy when working with mechanical devices.

Selected Criticism & A Posterior Response, Instance Two

DA. But there is a difference between, if the intention is down the line to make intervention, as you said in this community, and we will leave it for later whether this is about utility or some kind of artistic vision, that's one thing, but when you position it against Levittown, then this piece falls into some kind of comparative narrative, which seems to me, a completely separate project, and I can't put those projects together so well, both may be interesting, or could become interesting, but seems at odds within me, I don't know where to station myself as a viewer and as a participant in your piece it seems like it's a bit all over the place.

DH. I think the same way, I was struck by trying to figure out who your audience is, because here you have this very particular audience, and I don't think, I actually really liked the physicality of this presentation, the heat, and the rounded corners, we were all talking so much afterwards about your suit and we all felt like it was something that came out of the seventies, in a way, because of those rounded corners, and the use of slides, and I liked all of that, it made me more interested in the images, and I was trying to figure out the whole space, like an installation, so it surprises me a little to hear about the very ambitious goal of the project, because you're clearly really interested in all of these details and facts, I was surprised too to hear that you have a lot of hope for this community, and you want to help transform to a place where people can live. So I too think it's all over the place and I'm trying to figure out how you can, I want to hear about, if it's this big, what is this particular strand, maybe contain it a little bit.

The comparative narrative is one that addresses the socio political circumstances of the work. These circumstances are ones, albeit important, decidedly relegated to a secondary or tertiary position in the immediate discussion of the work. It is the detail oriented nature of narratives that would misdirect the intention of the project in discourse. One such detail is the current prevalence of Mercedes Benz branded vehicles in Levittown, a master planned suburb originally established to house returning soldiers from WWII. This detail is able to develop into a dialogue of historicism and collective memory, yet is a narrative I wish to omit initially. The resurgence, although, of the narrative in criticism of the work is welcome.

Details and facts are embraced in my practice. These characters are at times meant to guide the reading of the work, yet at other times is meant to demonstrate the physical consumption of time. In Lavan, Texas - Levittown, New York these facts and details are provided as the reading of particular images, coordinates, and photographic documentation. A series of minutes has also been produced to correspond with the exact date and time of all documentation.

The current presentation of the work is the first instance of display. All that has come before has been the preparation and marked by a phase of research. This work is the beginning of a larger project to similarly be titled Lavan, Texas - Levittown, New York. The collective facts and details are to inform the successive instances of presentation.

Process and Resolve

One consideration that was affected was the automatic rotation of the slides. The suggestion that the automatic rotation of the projectors was in sort a system of hermetic organization and of an impenetrable system devoid of participation seemed severe to me. In order to remove the projectors from the immediate vicinity of totalitarianism, I considered the initial state of the projectors.

As opposed to previous projects, and qualifying at once the participation of the audience, I determined that the presentation should be subject to the will of viewership. The initial state of the projectors would be "on", as far as the rotation of the fan and the lighting of the bulb, yet in the interim slide of the tray after the 80th slide and before the 1st. The eighteen slide projectors will not be automated but rather lie in waiting. Instructions will be placed within proximity to the projectors to press forward to view slides one through eighty.

The selection of the site remains undecided as of late March 2008, although the region for the site has become narrowed to the south and midwest. The rapid expansion of exurbs in these areas during the outset of the 21st century coupled with the mortgage and credit crisis adopted by the United States economy in the 2007 - 2008 calendar year has provided for informal and unexpected occupancy in these areas.

The photographs would purport to be unadulterated documentation at the micro scale. The role of the work would not be to confirm a problem nor to provide a solution. The photographs although would be a confirmation of status at a specific date and time.

4 Outlooks

On The Typology of Enumerative Works

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that document.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that observe.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that do nothing.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that may serve as an archive.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that reveal truth.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that obscure truth.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that catalog.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that may or may not listen.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that are developed around a series of restrictions.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that intervene for the purpose of their creation.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that may or may not address the issues they observe.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects whose intention is not to solve.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects for which there is a repeatable function for growth.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that speak to themselves.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that can be remade.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that are seen as cold or demonstrate these qualities during the act of observation.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that may or may not depict the figure, if so, it is done so statistically.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that dehumanize.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects carried out by an individual or a group acting as individuals.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that purport to be the antithesis of ephemera.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects in whose discussion is the mention of simulacrum, mimesis, and utopia.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects whose only life is injected through the expressed participation of author or audience.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that do not attempt to replace the subject.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that only exist for the disappearance or absence of the subject.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that are mourning and only intangibly address grief through a tangible object.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that photograph, count, and organize.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that store, file, and seal.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects whose life ends at conception or whose life has only a conceived eternal space.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that act as presenter.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that must have a presenter.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that apply a treatment.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that confront every subject with equal discrimination.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that cannot deny obsolescence.

Projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves are projects that must be protected.

But projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves
do not act,
can not act,
do not represent a system of politics but may serve as a tool for bureaucracy and politics themselves,
can not feed people,
can not house people,
can not teach people but can be used as a tool for lessons in morality,
can not replace the subject,
do not speak,
do not exist without the aggressive intervention of the author,
do not transcend issues of privilege,
can not be populist,
can not see but can only be seen,
do not provide reparations,
can not make amends,
do not provide equal and just representation,
can not be a witness to itself,
can not feel, touch, hear, smell, or breathe,
do not seem autonomous,
do not displace the subject,
do not interact with the subject,
can not be aware of the implications caused in part by the presentation it has provided,
do not show consequence,
can not demonstrate time,
can not encapsulate the past, present, and future for an audience,
do not simplify,
do not provide answers,
can not provide a solution.

So, projects that enumerate and are enumeration themselves
are documents,
are dated,
are gestures,
are metaphor,
are penance,
are a requiem,
are cumulative,
are thoughts,
are reflection,
are writing,
are a discussion most aptly moderated by the author,
are relevant only when chosen to be so,
are incomplete.

5 Conclusion

It is now, after the completion of four projects, that I may comment on what was and what could have been. The projects, in all, have been subject to delay at the end of each academic term. Each successive work has developed from the faults of the previous work, attempting to answer the resulting questions through itself.

In the case of Site 09: Indefensible Structures, the project remains as beams that have split and degenerated as described according to the framework of the project. Successive plans to implement the building material in the field or as installation in the gallery are expected in some respect, small or large.

In the case of Text 11: Site Translations, the process and foundation of the work, a winter in East Asia, provided for the vehicle of the book. It was that vehicle which determined there would be no physical intervention. The project, complete, serves as a study and guide in how to approach interrogative sculpture.

In the case of Study For Casablanca: Maps For Access And Improvised Housing, the interface and tools developed for interpreting the aerial view may be reapplied. I expect to reintroduce this application to identify massing typologies amongst several heavily settled urban centers in South America.

In the case of Lavon, Texas - Levittown, New York, supplementary materials and documentation associated with the work will be condensed into a catalog. The aforementioned will serve as research for a forthcoming thesis on the development and vitality of exurbs.

The aforementioned projects may or may not continue as a practice to which I am singularly dedicated.

I have the expectation that upcoming projects will encounter similar patterns of shortcomings and speed. It is with that expectation, the accuracy and precision in the aim of each work will increase. I readily make the concession that the context of future works will change as does the institution. The medium, craft, and quantity of the object, product, or service will also change.

It has been my intention to work between the space of art, architecture, and planning. The work which has occurred in that space has also meant to cross register as unique practices within each field as well as exist as interdisciplinary.

This is also the intent of any pursuit hereafter.

6 Epilogue

The preceding text has been an exercise, for which the duration has been several years. The inclusions and exclusions of the text serve to demonstrate the limitations available to linear and expository writing.

Through Mimesis and Methodology has heavily focused on the act of critique. It provides examples of critique from five instances throughout the production of four works at The Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In doing so, the argumentation of the text becomes focused on delivery and reception. A sacrifice made by the preceding is a vested discussion of the purpose of each individual work.

It is the hope of the individual project statements to provide the context and physical vehicle of each work. The photography and documentation of each work, which has been produced as heavily as the work itself, possesses a lesser role in the preceding text. These are to be considered supplementary materials that, may or may not, in the future become stand alone texts and catalogs.

Through Mimesis and Methodology is a presentation of the intangible, if within an artistic practice or any other, the tangible is the object, product, or service. The intangible has become the thought, the process, the intention.

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8 Acknowledgements

Mom & Dad

Krzysztof Wodiczko

Wendy Jacob

Antoni Muntadas

Ute Meta Bauer

Dennis Adams

Regina Maria Moeller

Po Kim & Sylvia Wald

Tera Hoefle

Kate Hollingsworth

Joe Gibbons

Douglas Ashford

Benjamin Wood

Andrea Frank

Bill Arning

Dan Van Roekel

Joe Zane

Joan Jonas

Sofia Ponte

Annatina Caprez

Alia Farid

Kate James

Marisa Jahn

Hope Ginsburg

Jegan Vincent De Paul

Jae Rhim Lee

Matthew Mazzota

Alexander Rosenberg

Caitlin Berrigan

Benjamin Gerdes

Jin Jung Wong

